



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Gary Nicksa, Senior Vice President, Operations

DATE: October 25, 2018

SUBJECT: Announcement of the Task Force on LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff

We write to announce the appointment of a new University-wide task force focused on improving the workplace experience of employees who are LGBTQIA+.

It is vital to Boston University's impact and relevance as a global research institution and major regional employer that all of our faculty and staff enjoy a supportive work environment that is consistent with our stated principles of employees' feeling valued and respected. To help accelerate our progress in this area, we are launching a Task Force on LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff – a multi-faceted effort that considers the current environment, as well as new approaches to programming, recruitment, retention, professional development and support, and network-building.

The Task Force will be charged with facilitating a set of University-wide discussions about how Boston University can become a more LGBTQIA+ inclusive community for faculty and staff and with developing recommendations to help us meet this objective. While this Task Force will focus its attention on faculty and staff, we encourage those interested in the student experience to work through Student Government and the Office of the Dean of Students to advance concerns and recommendations for changes. Where necessary, however, this Task Force can point to possible areas of overlap and/or opportunities for future exploration.

The charge to the Task Force will include the following:

1. Gather information about effective practices from other major research universities that are also focused on improving the working environment for LGBTQIA+ faculty, including recruitment, retention, and, when and if appropriate, promotion. Likewise, gather information about effective practices from other major research universities and/or corporations that have successfully developed programs and interventions to improve the quality of life for LGBTQIA+ non-faculty staff members. In particular, the Task Force's recommendations should be sensitive to the differences in rank and type of employee at the University to ensure that recommendations and strategies are as inclusive as possible.
2. Suggest specific ways we can elevate the importance of and relationship between LGBTQIA+ and intersectional identities (race, nationality, religion, ability, etc.), and

inclusiveness at Boston University, including recommending strategies to implement promising approaches toward enhancing our culture of holistic inclusiveness.

3. Gather information about any current formal and informal activities at the University—both on the Charles River and Medical campuses—that are focused on LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff. Suggest ways to integrate or expand current activities that may be siloed and/or nascent.
4. Suggest specific ways Boston University can create stronger ties with Boston-based and regional LGBTQIA+ groups and networks.
5. Given the historical complexities regarding the collection and maintenance of identifying lists, gather information about effective intra-group and organization-wide communication practices at other large organizations. Additionally, suggest multi-faceted ways we can develop effective communication strategies with LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff that are sensitive to the limited use of University-wide communications.

We realize that the efforts of the Task Force will undertake are complex and will involve faculty and staff from across the entire University. We would like to thank, in advance, the members of the Task Force for their service and give special acknowledgment to **Karen Warkentin**, Professor of Biology and Professor of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, and **Judi Burgess**, Director of Labor Relations, who have agreed to serve as co-chairs. Crystal Williams, Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion will provide administrative leadership from the Office of the Provost. More information on the Task Force and its work can be found on its new website: www.bu.edu/lgbtqiataaskforce. You may additionally contact the co-chairs with any questions at lgbtqia@bu.edu.

It is our hope to have a set of interim recommendations from the Task Force by February 1, 2019, an update at the Faculty Assembly at its spring meeting in 2019, and a full report to the Provost and the Senior Vice President for Operations by May 2019. We look forward to working with the Task Force and want to thank you, as well, for your participation in this important effort and for your commitment to an inclusive community at Boston University.

Task Force on LGBTQ Faculty and Staff

Co-chairs:

Judi Burgess, Director of Labor Relations

Karen Warkentin, Professor of Biology and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies,
College of Arts & Sciences

Members:

Willow Burke, Financial Analyst, Disability Services

Derek Howe, Vice President, Budget & Capital Planning

Terence Keane, Professor of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology, School of Medicine

Steve Marois, Director of Faculty Actions, Office of the Provost

Merav Opher, Associate Professor of Astronomy, College of Arts & Sciences

Anthony Petro, Assistant Professor of Religion and Women's Gender & Sexuality Studies,
College of Arts & Sciences

Michelle Porche, Clinical Associate Professor of Applied Human Development, Wheelock
College of Education & Human Development

Stacy Ulrich, Director of Student Programs and Leadership, College of Arts & Sciences

Robert Volk, Associate Professor of Legal Writing; Director, Legal Writing and Appellate
Advocacy Program, School of Law

Jacob Vukelich, IT Systems Administrator II, College of Arts & Sciences

William Waters, Associate Professor of German & Comparative Literature; Associate Director,
Center for the Study of Europe, College of Arts & Sciences; Executive Director and
Founder, Project GO-BU

Ann Zumwalt, Associate Professor of Anatomy & Neurobiology, School of Medicine